



## Knowledge Increase in the F-Era

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*Abstract: F-Era is the era of freedom and flexibility. So in the era of Facebook a vast and continuously increasing amount of idea and knowledge is available for those, who are willing to search it. Access is easy, however the quality of knowledge is questionable, because it originates from passionate amateurs. The search for validated and relevant knowledge has become the main task, and the evaluation of the results, which are available for the person longing for knowledge. It is the users' task and responsibility to decide, if the available knowledge is of appropriate quality. If the browsing person, who seeks knowledge is able to contextualize the new knowledge in accordance with the previous one, an increase of knowledge happens. Today's organizations are looking for workforce, which is competent, meaning that capable of interpreting its knowledge.*

*Keywords: F-Era, knowledge increase, process of learning, competence, corporate universities*

### 1 Features of the F-Era

The term 'F-Era' refers to many aspects of our present. On the one hand, based on the alphabetical order, it implies that in time we are after the E-Era, the e-tools and e-solutions are no longer essentials, nor e-mail, e-commerce and e-learning are the most important keywords. On the other hand, 'F' stands for free, as in freedom. Freedom is of crucial importance in many fields of our lives, just like free flow of capital, goods, workforce and knowledge, but for us the freedom of learning and teaching is relevant. In the F-Era both learning and knowledge are available for everyone who has an Internet connection, and aims to obtain or share new knowledge. At the same time F-Era refers to the Facebook phenomenon as well, because the influence of social media on our everyday life is inevitable [1].

Facebook is important concerning our socialization too, posts and comments, shared contents are available in an abundance, from all fields of life. Therefore Facebook isn't simply a tool for online communication among people, but became a way for self-expression, so most of us post emotions and thoughts, ideas and opinions on the world on a daily basis. Even if not all of the users of Facebook use

the site to share their inner world, but almost all of the users read the posts of their friends and acquaintances.

So in the Era of Facebook a vast and continuously increasing amount of idea and knowledge is available for those, who are willing to search it. Access is easy, however the quality of knowledge is questionable, because it originates from passionate amateurs [2]. The search for validated and relevant knowledge has become the main task, and browsing and surfing the net, and the evaluation of the found results, which are available for the person longing for knowledge. It is the users' task and responsibility to decide, if the available knowledge is of appropriate quality. If the browsing person, who seeks knowledge is able to contextualize the new knowledge in accordance with the previous knowledge, an increase of knowledge happens.

F-Era is the era of flexibility too. Nowadays it's more complicated for the rest of us to maintain attention for a longer period of time, because so many stimuli reach us in every minute. Carr says, that reading is a different thing as it used to be in the past, because books are often replaced by online contents [3]. Back in the days reading meant continuous focusing, and while we read, our attention wasn't driven away by other things. At present, reading online texts isn't simply reading any more, it became browsing, because whilst reading the reader may meander. Texts can take us to new homepages, links make it possible to jump to other texts and other online contents, whilst in the past a link meant only foot notes or the reference. Flexibility, the ability to change our focus quickly has become a new aspect of learning, searching and gathering knowledge.

At present the economic significance of Facebook is inevitable too, as it is a main platform for organizational communication and online marketing. For most enterprises the presence on Facebook is essential, to present itself for the stakeholders. The online success of a business can be calculated based on the number of likes and comments, or the number of its followers of its Facebook profile. However a liked profile or a product's profile won't result any profit, but this information can be used to estimate the number of customers the enterprise can achieve [4]. The key of the Facebook phenomenon is presence. One and a half decade ago we could say, that an enterprise is viable only if it has a homepage on the Internet, but by now this same minimal requirement is connected to the appearance on Facebook and other social media sites.

## **2 Change in the Process of Learning**

One of the most important features of F-Era is the unlimited quantity of knowledge available. The consequence of this abundance is, that knowledge is shallow, its validity and quality are questionable. The knowledge acquired during

the traditional educational system is validated and approved, which means, that in the past, then and there, it worked, in case of certain circumstances. On the other hand, this kind of knowledge isn't really valuable in the F-Era, because it is easily accessible for everyone, and quite surely refers to the past. So it isn't necessarily valid in the present, and will surely be out of date by tomorrow.

The essence and process of learning was described in different ways by the different disciplines of psychology. Behaviourism defines it as a changing of our responses to stimuli. According to the views of cognitivism, learning is a process of storing, managing and recalling memories. Constructivism says that learners create knowledge and meaning themselves in order to understand the world around, so learning happens by reconstructing known terms and experiences, and their connections about the world. It's important to notice, that in this way the knowledge increase is not a cumulative process, new knowledge isn't simply added to the previous experiences, but new elements of knowledge adjust the previous ones, have an effect on it, so the process results in reconstruction and reorganization. Before the learning the learner had a picture of the world, and the essence of learning is that after the process a new picture will emerge in a different way. The learner gives meaning to the new knowledge in accordance with the previous knowledge and rules of thinking, but the new knowledge also affects the organization of the previous picture, it reforms it, so a new big picture is formed by learning.

Based in Polanyi's work, we can say, that when we learn, we build our personal knowledge [5]. According to the philosophy of constructivism, personal knowledge is built as a result of a reconstructing process, which is individual and lasts for the whole life of the learner. So the term of lifelong learning refers to all people, not only for those, who learn in a formal way in the traditional educational system during their whole life, or always search for new topics to learn. This approach changes the picture of traditional education, because it says, that it isn't the teacher who transfers his knowledge to the student, but a process of reconstruction happens in the mind of the student. So during the process of learning, not simply new knowledge is added to the old one, but the entire personal knowledge changes.

### **3 Organizational Expectations on Competence**

For the safe operation of organizations the workforce which is able to use its knowledge in the given context is of crucial importance, because knowledge has become probably the most important resource. It is still a question, if knowledge can be considered as a resource or not, because unlike other traditional resources it isn't scarce, but on the contrary an abundance of shallow knowledge appears. So it isn't the quantity, but the quality and validity of the knowledge that is

questionable. The purpose of business organizations is to provide workforce for their operation, which is able to respond quickly to the challenges of the dynamically changing environment and the atypical, unexpected changes and effects. Constantly evolving employees are capable of building the learning organization of the F-Era, which achieves sustainability through continuously providing knowledge, new ideas and innovation.

The biggest challenge for educational institutions is the question, how can they train latter employees, who can perform in a fast paced working environment, where their knowledge becomes out of date as quickly as lightning, where the knowledge of yesterday is insufficient, and the knowledge of today is sufficient only at best. The knowledge of persons participating in traditional, academic education, the knowledge of subsequent leaders and decision makers of the future refers to the past, and is about 'know how'. Contrarily most organizations are about to employ workforce, which is able to apply its knowledge in a given working environment, knowing the domain of validity, knowing what 'there and then' can be applied from the knowledge they have. So the emphasis has been moved from 'know how' to 'know when'.

In the process of selection of most organizations, not only the qualifications and language skills, but personal and professional competences of applicants to be employed play a key role. There are (at least) two different definitions of competence in practice. In general, or the way human resource managers use it, a person is competent, if it is able to reach a certain level of performance or handle a situation or problem due to abilities and knowledge [6]. However, according to another viewpoint, a person can be considered competent, if it is able to contextualize and apply its knowledge in a certain situation. So in another way, being competent equals knowing how to interpret knowledge [7]. "Competence is not the same as knowledge and it is not even an entity but a dynamic relationship of three entities: the knower, the knowledge and the context" [8]. Consequently, two different persons with the same knowledge and abilities on the same professional field, can perform differently, based on the context. Furthermore, it is also possible, that the same person in two different environments can't achieve the same level of performance, so it is competent in one situation, but it isn't in the other.

An organization is capable of handling the radical changes of its environment only, if it develops its ability to adapt, and furthermore, can come before changes, and influence its environment itself. That's the reason why organizations try to establish and operate educational institutions on their own, because this way they can provide themselves competent workforce for their safe operation. During the last twenty years we could see many examples of corporate universities, so of strategic associations with universities or shared education. The purpose of schools as such is to disseminate the culture and identity of the organization, to foster the development of not only on the job skills, but teach competences like leadership, creative thinking or problem solving [9].

These internal educational branches of business organizations are located halfway between universities and centres of academic knowledge and the world of business organizations. The validity of knowledge offered by them is different from the validity of knowledge offered by universities, because it is basically organization-specific, where actual or latter workforce is trained based on the needs of the institution. Consequently, all corporate universities are unique, different. Still can be said, that students participating in such an education can build knowledge and an ability for adaptation, which can't be applied in all organizations, but in ones with the same organizational culture this knowledge can be considered as valuable.

### **Conclusions**

The F-Era requires new ways for both learning and teaching. Knowledge workers of this era are eager to build a valuable knowledge, and are willing to use whatever tools and help they get. An important upcoming question is about the support of both learners and teachers. How can a corporate university be managed, so it could provide competent workforce for the organization? How will the process of learning change in such an environment? So there are still many questions to be answered concerning the knowledge increase in the F-Era.

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